GRAVE HUMOR • Hall

GRAVE HUMOR

By Alonzo C. Hall

$2.95

For more than forty years the author has, when time permitted, wandered about in old graveyards, looking for tombstone inscriptions of an odd or humorous turn. The wandering has resulted in the collection of hundreds of epitaphs. Many of his collection are memorial verses for famous persons, and some are really beautiful in thought and expression. But always he has had a keen eye for the unusual and funny. This book is made up of the chuckle type.

If you are curious to see what oddities may be found carved in stone, open this volume to any page. The author won't mind if you begin smiling, or laughing outright!

After the introduction, which may or may not be illuminating, there is little comment. This collection of "last words" lets the original material speak for itself.

Dave Morrah, humorist and gifted writer, did the illustrations.

GRAVE HUMOR

A COLLECTION OF HUMOROUS EPITAPHS

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For
Benjie, Mary, Billy, and Jane Baker

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GRAVE HUMOR

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COLLECTING EPITAPHS is an ancient, honorable, and rewarding hobby. My own adoption of this hobby grew out of an interest in American history and American literature, and specifically from a desire to visit the birthplaces and the graves of our most distinguished men. Thus, one Sunday afternoon many years ago, while meandering in the old Granary Burying Ground in the heart of Boston, where Franklin's parents are buried and where many worthies sleep, I came upon an humble little slate marker erected by a husband to commemorate the virtues of his very faithful wife:

> "She looked well after the hogs, the chickens,
> and cows, and always kept my socks darned."

These quaint, humorously naive words started me looking for "grave humor"—and my search through the years has turned up hundreds of odd, humorous, and folk-meaningful "last words."

From the viewpoint of folklore, as well as from the viewpoint of biography and history, the older graveyards are more interesting and rewarding. Present fashion in monuments generally rules out human foibles, idiosyncrasies, superstitions, romance, religion, wit, marital relations, and so on. The oldest markers, made of imported hard slate, are unusual in their use

of non-Christian symbols: skulls and cross bones, death masks, chubby cherubs; the carvings, however, are often quite original and artistic. The later Christian symbols most frequently seen are: the hourglass, with the sand run out; clasped hands; a finger pointing heavenward; the harp or lyre, with a broken string; the weeping willow, possibly the most universally used symbol of grief; Father Time wielding his scythe; the open Bible, sometimes with a text carved; angelic forms; lighted and unlighted candles; in coastal towns, symbols of the seafarer; and for infants, a lamb.

Something in the way of folklore could be made of the unusual kinds of grave markers and grave decorations. There is a touch of the pathetic to find graves in the mountains covered with seashells. Some sort of superstition, maybe to keep the ghost from returning home, must have led people to place medicine bottles, lamps, burned out light bulbs, spoons, cabinets, vases, and the like, on graves. In St. Michael's Churchyard, Charleston, S. C., a bedstead was used as a monument. In the jug-making section of North Carolina, near Carthage, one finds pottery in various forms used as markers. On a few stones in our states are to be found pictures of the deceased (a French fashion). Often the symbol may be revealing without any words, like a graphic one in Wilmington, N. C. The monument erected to a husband is in the shape of a cross, but the symbol of suffering must have applied to the wife; for chiseled on the cross are all sorts of hideous creeping things. The wife must have thought it an appropriate memorial for her husband who died in delirium tremens.

At Hendersonville, N. C., a woman was so entombed that at a certain hour on clear days the rays of the sun would strike her face. In the old cemetery in Tarboro, N. C., there is an unusual wood monument (cypress, no doubt) over one hundred years old. On the face of the perpendicular board are these words:

"Willie
Hicks
was
A
Good
Boy
1838"

When you have wandered about in graveyards and read time and again on wasting and toppling stones the words, "Gone but not forgotten," you can hardly escape the pathetic irony of the phrase. The humor becomes a little grim. But this faith in a monument to keep a name alive, along with the virtues of the deceased, goes back several thousands of years. Many an inscription, therefore, has been written both by surviving friends and by persons for themselves; and the eulogies are not always modest in their claims upon immortal fame.

In the early days monuments were very expensive, especially those with long eulogies; so, something of a family's standing could be gauged by the very length of the epitaph; and this sometimes resulted in family pride (or jealousy) revealing itself through over costly funerals and elaborate epitaphs.

What does not meet the eye in these graveyards, though very interesting, are the changes in funeral practices. While the horrible customs of the ancient world, like the sacrifice of animals and human beings upon the death of the master, never came to our country; while the wailing of hired professional mourners was never widely heard in our land, just the same, certain trappings of death and curious funeral customs did prevail for a long time.

Some of these widely prevailing customs are almost unbelievable, and a few of them lasted well into this century. In view of the former somber attitude toward death and toward the world as a lowground of sor-

rows and a vale of tears, it is amazing that at the same time funerals were regular drinking parties. Indeed, they became so noisy in Boston that the authorities forbade Sunday funerals. When a minister died the town honored him by furnishing the meats and drinks. The town had a fund from which the rum and hard cider would be provided for the poor. One reads in the old journals that the alcoholic cheer consumed at a poor person's funeral cost five times as much as the coffin. Naturally, from the viewpoint of old timers, the drying up of funerals ruined them!

Another custom which grew to fantastic proportions was that of sending gold rings, kid gloves, and various types of mourning jewelry by way of inviting friends to a funeral. Pride was, is, and shall be! For instance, the wife of Waitstill Winthrop spent one-fifth of her husband's estate on his funeral. Translated into present money values the sum was more than $25,000.00. Solid gold mourning rings, appropriately engraved with "Prepare for Death," "Death Parts United Hearts," "Death Conquers All," et cetera, were very expensive, as were the gloves. Those people of a social position equal to Winthrop's were sent gold rings; others received mourning gifts according to their rank. One Puritan divine collected during his ministry a quart cup full of gold rings, not to mention over 2,000 pairs of kid gloves! The plain fact is that mourning dress, meats, drinks, and other funeral expenses got so out of hand that New England authorities passed laws limiting such expenses.

In earlier days the place of interment was determined by one's position in the community. Certain classes were ruled out of churchyards altogether. Burial within the church itself created unseemly rivalry; so did the seating of the living within the church. Just the same, one outstanding thing about cemeteries and epitaphs is that death is an equalizer, even if there is a "pauper's section" and in spite of the great disparity

in the costs of the monuments. An inscription on the tomb of Robert Phillip, gravedigger, of Kingsbridge, Devon, England, illustrates with a smile a very human element:

"Here I lie at the Chancel door;
Here I lie because I am poor;
The farther in the more you pay;
Here I lie as warm as they."

Most of the trappings of death have passed away. For instance: the use of mourning stationery with its black border; the use of mourning cards; the custom, when a member of the family died, of turning the pictures and mirrors to the wall; closing the shutters of the parlor (the parlor itself has gone out); women wearing black for months; men wearing black crepe on the arm or hat; burying valuables with the dead (grave robbers had something to do with ending that); tolling the church bell at death and during the funeral procession to and from the church; the dark oblong coffins and the black-tasseled hearses; and the pall which was carried over the heads of the coffin bearers. The word "pall" remains with us; but its meaning has changed. Coffin or under-bearers are now called "pall" bearers, though there is no pall.

Not only these trappings, but the services, too, have changed. For a time there was no funeral sermon, or even a prayer; ministers were present, but the memorial consisted of verses, often puns on the name, which were tacked onto the coffin or published in broadsides. From a rather secular affair there was a gradual change to a service, sermon and all, of more than an hour's length; and from that, within our day, to a twenty- or thirty-minute dignified service of song, reading, and prayer. The funeral is no longer so funereal. Another change: in the olden days children were required to attend these last rites, to look on death and hear the rattle of dirt on the boards; the idea being to prepare

them for following after. When has the reader seen a child on such an occasion! Or how often has he seen the minister use a handful of earth or heard him say, "Dust unto dust!" In time the phrase may need as much explanation as "well-sweep" in Whittier's "Snow Bound."

But one custom has remained constant from centuries before Christ to the present hour: namely, burying the dead facing east. The custom seems to have arisen out of the belief that the call to judgment, the proclamation of Doomsday, would come with the rising sun. This idea was common among the American Indians; the Navahos even have the entrance to their homes facing the east. To the Christian the rising sun was symbolic of the Resurrection. The idea of a return to life here would explain the most striking graveyard I have ever seen—the one at White Horse on the Yukon where small houses, with doors and windows and furniture, cover the Indian graves, the doors facing the rising sun!

So far as I know there have not been many perpendicular burials anywhere. There are two in North Carolina: one of a soldier at Beaufort and another, that of A. I. Credle, 1844, at St. George's Episcopal Church in Hyde County. This last one has a humorous touch; the man had suffered all his life from asthma and by specific request was buried standing up since he "couldn't rest lying down."

It would not be surprising if you are amazed at many of the epitaphs in this little volume. We are not used to such frankness, such a display of human foibles, and such sardonic humor. We would be equally startled by the forthright preaching of the Puritan minister. What if our parson should call our name in prayer before the congregation: "Oh Lord, cure so and so of that ungodly strut of his!" Or what if his prayer ran on for an hour or more, the customary length of the Puritan minister's! And if our children brought home a dupli-

cate of the "New England Primer" what would we think of the emphasis upon sin and death, the illustrations of the same, and the motivation of learning and obeying: "For God is a consuming fire."

A In Adam's Fall
We sinned all

X Xerxes the Great did die
And so must you and I

T Time cuts down all
Both great and small

Z Zaccheus did climb the tree
His Lord to see

It was a long time before *K* stood for:

'Tis youth's delight
to fly a kite

Gone are the dunce's cap and the dunce's stool, and the idea of teaching by ridicule! Gone, also, are the ducking stool, the pillory and the stocks, and the branding irons, associated with all the old courts, which aimed to correct through humiliation of the physical person! Gone are the black tasseled hearses, the gloomy funeral processions of feather-pages, mutes, mourners in heavy black sashes, the mourning earrings, brooches, lockets (cases in which to enclose human hair); gone are the mourning cards adorned with downcast angels and drooping willows; and many superstitions associated with death, like "telling the bees" to keep them from swarming when a member of the family died!

If enough has not been said about our ancestors' love for preaching, any old graveyard will suggest it. "At Peace" and "At Rest," most often seen on stones, suggest that a battle had been fought and a victory won. There are many lines, however, addressed directly to

the reader for admonition and warning. For instance, there are literally hundreds of variations on this one found the world over:

Waynesville, N. C.

Effie Jean Robinson
1897-1922

"Come blooming youths, as you pass by
And on these lines do cast an eye
As you are now, so once was I;
As I am now, so must you be;
Prepare for death and follow me."

I have found scratched on several stones the comment of passers-by on the above advice:

"To follow you I am not content
Until I know which way you went."

Of course there are many beautiful epitaphs, both in expression and in thought. For at one time, especially in England, distinguished men of letters wrote memorial tributes. But my interest has been in the humor, most of it unconscious, to be found in tombstone inscriptions. This collection is frankly slanted toward "grave humor"; the smile, however, as in all true humor, is not at but with human beings; it is not supercilious but is rather understanding and sympathetic. The smile is like that any of us experiences in looking through the old family album.

Through the years many epitaphs have been sent me from all-over, sometimes with pictures, for which I am grateful; and many of these which proved to be authentic have been used; but here are a few I wish I could verify and cannot, though friends gave them to me. For instance:

Aunt Charlotte

"Here lies the body of poor Aunt Charlotte
Born a virgin, died a harlot;
For sixteen years she kept her virginity,
A damn'd long time for this vicinity."

Supposedly this one has a moral!

Mary Jones

"Here lie the bones of Mary Jones
For her death held no terrors;
Born a virgin, died a virgin,
No hits, no runs, no errors."

Mary Anne

"Mary Anne has gone to rest,
She now sleeps on Abraham's breast;
It's mighty fine for Mary Anne
But not so good for Abraham."

Dentist Brown

"Stranger approach this spot with gravity
Dentist Brown is filling his last cavity."

Pa

"Ma loved Pa
And Pa loved women;
Ma caught Pa with one in swimmin';
Here lies Pa."

It is pretty obvious that the following is too clever:

"Here lies a pedestrian, cold as ice;
He jumped only once when he should have jumped
twice."

So is this one:

Mannie

"Here lies the body of Mannie,
They put him here to stay;
He lived the life of Riley
While Riley was away."

The arrangement of the epitaphs into certain divisions: Pet Phrases, Puns, Marital Relationships, Trades and Professions, Sermons on Stone, Sudden Departures, Oddities, Lambs and Rosebuds, is for convenience in reading and reference, and not for any strictly critical purpose. Indeed, many of the epitaphs could go into two or more of these categories.

You may conclude that graveyards, in a way, are about as articulate as a modern forum, and just as illuminating, or sad, or funny. If you are a pessimist or an idealist you will find words to match your mood and if you are pensive you will find philosophy. Lawyer, doctor, baker, preacher, teacher, prohibitionist, politician, sailor, soldier, wife, husband, old maid, bachelor, child, the purposeful and the indifferent, with their respective individual traits, conditioned by their time—all are still talking! Some of their words, to be sure, suggest another day and fashion: Consort, sire, spouse, relict; the given names are suggestive of their moral thinking: Faith, Hope, Charity, Thankful, Consider, Goody, Brevity, Supply, Waitstill, Hopestill, Constance, Love, Patience; and the symbols on the grave stones ("tombrocks") are on a par with gingerbread architecture of yesterday; and no more strange than picture windows without pictures. What if we named our offspring after what is uppermost in our thoughts! There would likely be many Installment Jonses and Time Payment Smiths! Seriously, you may emerge from reading old inscriptions with a wealth of important Americana, or with the feeling expressed for

himself by a witty English writer, Thomas Gay (Westminster Abbey):

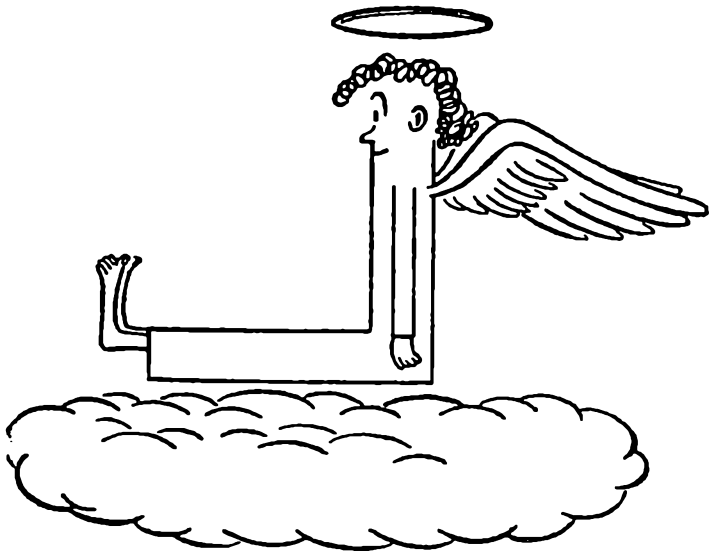
"Life is a jest, and all things show it;
I thought so once, and now I know it."

Or as an epitaph has it:

Beaufort, N. C.

Samuel Leffers
85 yrs. 11 mos. 25 days
Died Oct. 7, 1822

"A man's good name is his best monument."



PET PHRASES, INEPT CONCLUSIONS

WE SHOULD EXPECT to find pet phrases, clichés, and platitudes on tombstones. We are constantly hearing them and using them. These "sayings" or proverbs possibly form the oldest type of literature; they are the garnered summaries of human experience; and we go right on quoting the old adages and creating new ones. Among the most common mortuary words and phrases are: "At Rest," "Asleep," "Well done good and faithful servant," "Gone but not forgotten," "Reader go thou and do likewise," "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," "Prepare for death and follow me," and "Their warfare is accomplished."

There is no smile at the words as such, but here and there I have found inscriptions in which the pet phrase is used with disastrous results, or at least with humorous consequences. In some instances the ending quotation does not logically follow what preceded. Sometimes, too, misspelling gives a funny and surely unintended twist to the familiar phrase. For instance, this from the Elon College, N. C., cemetery:

"Our little darling has gone to be an Angle."

Or like the one from East Derry, N. H., the mistake in which may be explained by the stonecutter's lively sense of humor:

Mr. James Ewins
died 1781, aged 70

"My glass is rum"

And this from Cooperstown, N. Y., in which the letter "e" is left out of the last word; the stonecutter misspaced his lettering and wound up with no room for that important "e":

Mrs. Susannah Ensign
Died 1825, aged 54

"Lord, she is Thin"

Sometimes the memorial is quite confusing:

Birmingham, England

"O cruel Death! how could you be so unkind
To take him before and leave me behind!
You should have taken both of us, if either,
Which would have been more pleasing to the
survivor."

Again, some phrase of every-day speech may be found cut in stone, as this from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada:

"Goodbye
Jim
Take ker
O' yourself"

Burlington, Mass.

Ira Prentice

Deceased July 20, 1819
in ye 9th year of his age
He died of cholera morbus
caused by eating green fruit
In the certain hope of a
blessed immortality.

Reader go thou and do likewise.

Woolwich Churchyard, England

Major James Brush

Sacred to the memory of Major James
Brush, Royal Artillery, who was killed
by the accidental discharge of a pistol
by his orderly, 14th April, 1831.

Well done good and faithful servant

Greenville, N. C.

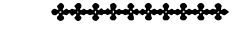
J. R. Plossoe

In my distress I cried unto the Lord and he heard me.

Wayland, Mass.

Here lies the body of Dr. Hayward,
The man who never voted.

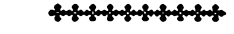
Of such is the kingdom of heaven



First Presbyterian Church Cemetery,
Greensboro, N. C.

On identical monuments, standing side by side:

Amelia Lindsay 1816-1881	Jesse Lindsay 1808-1886
Forever with the Lord	With Christ, which is far better

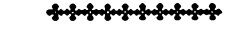


Jamestown, Va.

William Sherwood
Died 1682

"Here lyeth William Sherwood
that was born in the parish
of White Chappell near London,

A Great Sinner waiting for a
Joyfull Resurrection."



Beaufort, N. C.

Mary E. Craft

Mary E. wife of Benjamin Lee Craft
and daughter of Bridges and Sarah
Arendell who was born Jan. 1, 1825
and died Sept. 4th, 1858.

"Tho' he slay me yet will I trust in him."

Cedar Grove Cemetery, New Bern, N. C.

In memory of
Mrs. Martha Clark
wife of Wm. W. Clark
D. 1839 age 83

She was a member of the Baptist church for sixty years.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God

Salisbury, N. C.

The monument to the first wife has a long eulogy; that to the second wife is brief:

The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away;
Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Branchport, N. Y.

Here lyeth Jas Ross
and Ruth his wife

They fought a good fight
Their warfare is done

Montville, Conn.

Daniel Chappell who was killed in
the act of taking a whale, October
18, 1845, aged 25 years.

Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord

Beaufort, N. C.

Michael Arendell
1819-1884

I was sick and ye visited me

Pewsey, Wiltshire, England

Lady O'Looney

Here lies the body
of
Lady O'Looney
commonly called the Sublime
She was
Bland, passionate and deeply religious
Also she painted
In water colors,
And sent several pictures
To the exhibition.
She was the first cousin
To Lady Jones
And of such
Is the kingdom of Heaven.

Sparta Diggins, Cal.

John Smith

In Memory of
John Smith, who met
vierlent death near this spot
18 hundred 40 too. He was shot
by his own pistill;
It was not one of the new kind
but an old-fashioned
brass barrell, and of such is the
kingdom of heaven.

Hope springs eternal, as witness this one for a "Miss":

Cedar Grove Cemetery, New Bern, N. C.

Mary E. Oliver
daughter of John & Eliz
Pearson Oliver. Died Mar. 6
1836. Aged 82 yrs.

Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

An unusual turn to a well-known phrase:

Salisbury, N. C.

He fought a good fight but his razor was dull.

Middletown, Conn.

Sacred to the memory of Charles and Varley

Sons of loving parents
Who died in infancy

We can only surmise that the affectionate friends erected the tombstone!

Leith, Scotland

Erected to the memory of John McFarlane
Drowned in the water of Leith by a few
affectionate friends.

Ulster, Ireland

Erected to the memory of
John Phillips,
Accidentally shot,
as a mark of affection by his brother,
Sleeps in peace after life's fitful fever.

Yarmouth, Mass.

Here lyeth ye body of
Sarah Bloomfield,
Aged 74.

Cut off in blooming yuthe, we can but pity.

Snow Camp, N. C.

Here lies a virgin with her babe
resting in her arms.

Plymouth, Mass.

Here lies the body of
Thomas Vernon,
the only surviving son of
Admiral Vernon.

Hawk's Ferry, Cal.

To Lem S. Frame, who during his life shot
89 Indians, whom the Lord delivered into
his hands, and who was looking forward to
making up his hundred before the end of the
year, when he fell asleep in Jesus at his
house at Hawk's Ferry, March 27, 1843.

The mix-up in this one is not unusual:

Belturbet, Ireland

John Higley

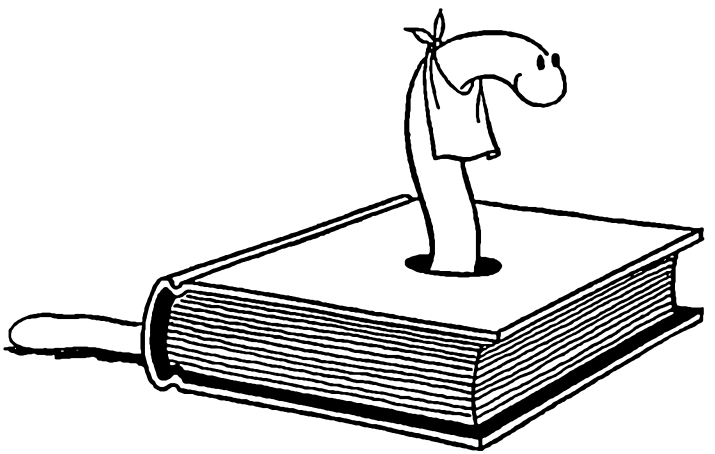
Here lies John Higley, whose father and mother were drowned on their passage to America. Had they both lived, they would have been buried here.

Hope deferred:

Essex, England

Mary Ellis

Here lies the body of Mary Ellis, Daughter of Thomas Ellis, and Lydia his wife, of this parish. She was a virgin of virtuous character, and most promising hopes. She died on the 3rd of June, 1609, aged one hundred and nineteen.



PUNNING

WE MAKE FUN of the lowly pun, even wincing now and then at the sound of one; yet, from the beginnings of speech to the present, no form of humor has been more indulged in by the great and near-great than this same play on words. In 17th-18th century America and England the most learned men would turn to writing punning memorial verses when one of their number died. Even stern, dignified ministers like John Cotton or Cotton Mather could not refrain from penning such verses. And it was a sort of field day when the name of the deceased could be easily played upon, as for instance the name of Reverend Samuel Stone:

"A stone more than the Ebenezer famed;
Stone resplendent diamond, right orient named;
A cordial stone, that oft cheered hearts
With pleasant wit, with Gospel rich imparts;
Whetstone that edgified th' obtusest mind;
Loadstone, that drew the iron heart unkind.
Pond'rous stone——" and on and on!

In like vein, the following from a long elegy on Reverend John Cotton:

"A living, breathing Bible; tables where
Both covenants at large engraven were;
Gospel and law in's heart had each its column;
His head an index to the sacred volume;
His very name a title-page; and next
His life a commentary on the text.
O, what a monument of glorious worth,
When, in a new edition, he comes forth,
Without errata, may we think he'll be
In leaves and covers of eternity!"

Reverend Jonathan Mitchell was honored by the following conceits, or mortuary fancies:

"Here lies the darling of his time,
Mitchell expired in his prime;
Was four years short of forty-seven,
Was found full ripe and plucked for heaven."

Many plain-speaking and consciously humorous epitaphs are found in England. So many, indeed, that attempts have been made to suppress writing such outlandish mortuary verses. There are instances where the departed was given a fake name for the sake of a rhyme, with the actual name added as a postscript, as:

England

Here lies the remains of Thomas Woodhen,
The most amiable of husbands and excellent of men.

N.B. His real name was Woodcock but it wouldn't come in rhyme.

Or the pun might be doubly effective, like this:

England

Chest

Here lies one Chest within another;
The one of wood
Was very good,
We can't say so much for t'other.

or:

London, England

Ann Mann

Here lies Ann Mann,
Who lived an old maid
But died an old Mann
Dec. 8, 1767

Surely the author must have been smiling through his lines on

Sheffield, England

John Knott

Here lies a man that was Knott born,
His father was Knott before him,
He lived Knott and did Knott die,
Yet underneath this stone doth lie.

St. Johns, Stamford, England

William Pepper
Died 1783

Though hot my name, yet mild my nature,
I bore good will to every creature;
I brewed good ale and sold it too,
And unto each I gave his due.

Typical of the longer epitaphs on artisans in which the pun involves many details is this on a watchmaker:

Devon, England

George Routleigh

Here lies in a horizontal position
The outward case of
George Routleigh, watchmaker
Whose abilities in that line were an
Honour to his profession.
Integrity, was the mainspring, and
Prudence the regulator
Of all the actions of his life
Humane, Generous, and Liberal
His hand never stopped
Till he had relieved distress
So nicely regulated were all his emotions
That he never went wrong,
Except when set agoing
By people
Who did not know
His key
Even then he was easily
Set right
He had the art of disposing
Of his time so well

That his hours glided by
In one continual round
Of pleasure and delight
Till an unlucky minute put a period
To his existence
He departed this life
November 24, 1802
Aged 57
Wound up
In the hope of being taken in hand
By his maker
And being thoroughly cleaned and repaired
And set agoing
In the world to come.

A fine example of playing on words is the following by Benjamin Franklin, who loved a clever pun. This epitaph, however, is not to be found on his tomb at Philadelphia.

The body
of
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,
Printer

(Like the cover of an old book,
its contents torn out,
And stript of its lettering and gilding),
Lies here, food for worms.
But the work itself shall not be lost,
For it will, as he believed, appear once more,
In a new and more elegant edition,
Revised and corrected
By
The Author.

Note the spelling!

Staverton, England

Betty Bowden

Here lies the body of Betty Bowden
Who would live longer but she coulden,
Sorrow and grief made her decay,
Till her bad leg card her away.

Tazewell, Tenn.

John Auricular

Here lies John Auricular
Who in the ways of the Lord
Walked perpendicular.

St. Alban's, England

Martha Gwynn

Sacred to the memory of Martha Gwynn
Who was so very pure within,
She burst the outer shell of sin,
And hatched herself a cherubim.

Wetumpka, Ala.

Solomon Pease

Here lies the body of Solomon Pease
Under the daisies and the trees;
Pease not here, only the pod,
Pease shelled out and gone to God.

Sussex, England

In memory of Captain Underwood,
Who was drowned.

Here lies free from blood and slaughter,
Once Underwood — now Underwater.

Newport, R. I.

In memory of
George Whitehead
who departed this Life
May 26th 1870
Aged 71 years
A native of Boston, England

My trowel and hammer lies decline
So does my rule and my line
My building is up, my course is run
My scaffold struck, my work is done.

Yorkshire, England

Miles

This tombstone is a milestone. Why so?
Because beneath lies Miles. He's Miles below.
A little man was he, a dwarf in size,
Yet now stretched out, at least Miles long he lies.
This grave, though small, contains a space so wide.
There's Miles in breadth and length and room beside.

Moreton-in-the-Marsh,
Gloustershire, England

Richard Lawton

Here lie the bones of RICHARD LAWTON,
Whose death, alas! was strangely brought on;
Trying one day his corns to mow off,
His toe, or rather what it grew to,
An inflammation quickly flew to.
Which took, alas! to mortifying,
And was the cause of Richard's dying.

The angler hooked:

Ripon, Yorkshire, England

Here lies poor but honest
Bryan Tunstall
He was a most expert angler
Until Death, envious of his art
Threw out his line and hooked him
and
landed him here the 21st day of April
1790

Providence Cemetery
Graham, N. C.

Lydia J. Moon

"She was the sunshine of our home."

Bridgewater, England

Thomas Huddlestone

Here lies THOMAS HUDDLESTONE, Reader don't smile!
But reflect, as this tombstone you view,
That Death, who kill'd him, in a very short while
Will huddle a stone upon you.

Norfolk, England

Matthew Mud

Here lies MATTHEW MUD
Death did him no hurt
When alive he was Mud
And now dead he's but dirt.

Oxford, England

John Cruker

Here lyeth JOHN CRUKER, a maker of bellowes
His crafte's master and King of good fellowes;
Yet when he came to the hour of his death,
He that made bellowes, could not make breath.

Norwich, England

Henrietta Maria Bray, an actor

Here, Reader, you may plainly see,
That Wit nor Humour here could be
A Proof against Mortality.

St. Nicholas Burial Ground, England

Tom Booth

Here lies a marksman, who with art and skill,
When young and strong, fat bucks and does did kill.
Now conquered by grim Death (go, reader, tell it!)
He's now took leave of powder, gun, and pellet.
A fatal dart, which in the dark did fly,
Has laid him down, among the dead to lie.
If any want to know the poor slave's name,
'Tis old TOM BOOTH,—ne'er ask from whence he came.

For a brewer:

Liverpool, England

John Scott

Poor JOHN SCOTT lies buried here;
Although he was both hale and stout
Death stretched him on the bitter bier.
In another world he hops about.

Wales

Meredith Morgan

Under this stone lies Meredith Morgan
Who blew the bellows of our church organ;
Tobacco he hated, to smoke most unwilling,
Yet never so pleased as when pipes he was filling;
No reflection on him for rude speech could be cast;
Though he made our old organ give many a blast.
No puffer was he, though a capital blower,
He could fill double G, and now lies a note lower.

MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

NATURALLY husband-wife-children relationships and family usages are dealt with in epitaphs; and often the results are humorous, whether intentional or unintentional. Sometimes the husband, more often the wife, gets in the last word. The frankness, also, is sometimes startling, whatever the reason for it might have been.

Possibly the smile provoked by the words carved on his wife's tombstone, Burlington, Vt., was unintended:

"I called upon the Lord and He heard me
And delivered me out of all my troubles."

One can read a great deal into the last words of the fellow in Georgia which were put on his gravestone:

"I told you I was sick!"

But there would not likely be any questions as to the intent of this one from Chatham Churchyard, England:

The husband had buried two wives side by side; on the first one's stone he had these words cut:

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away,
blessed be the name of the Lord."

On the second wife's:

"I called upon the Lord, and he heard me,
and delivered me out of all my troubles."

New Market, England

The two wives of Tom Sexton lie by the side of each other; but the epitaph for Sarah distinguishes between the two:

Sarah Sexton

Here lies the body of SARAH SEXTON,
She was a good soul, and never vex'd one;
But I can't say as much for her at the next stone.

This epitaph raises questions:

Islington Churchyard, England

In memory of
Elizabeth Emma Thomas,
Who died the 28th October, 1808,
aged 27 years.

She had no fault, save what Travellers give the Moon:
Her light was lovely, but she died too soon.

Hatfield, Mass.

Beneath this stone
A lump of clay
Lies Arabella Young
Who on the 21st of May
1771
Began to hold her tongue.

Sargentville, Maine

Sacred to the memory of
Elisha Philbrook and his wife Sarah

Beneath these stones do lie,
Back to back my wife and I!
When the last trumpet the air shall fill
If she gets up, I'll just lie still.

This one is known in the community as the "Oyster Stone":

Knight's Corner,
Pelham, Mass.

Warren Gibbs
Died by arsenic poison
March 23, 1860 Age 36 years
5 months and 23 days

Think my friends when this you see
How my wife has dealt with me
She in some oysters did prepare
Some poison for my lot and share
Then of the same I did partake
And nature yielded to its fate
Before she my wife became
Mary Felton was her name.

Erected by his Brother
Wm. Gibbs

Stowe, Vt.

I was Somebody — who, is no
Business of Yours

Duxbury, Mass.

Asenath
widow of
Simeon Soule
Died
Feb. 25, 1865
Aged
87 years, 11 mo.
& 19 days.
The Chisel can't help
her any.

Putnam, Conn.

Phinias G. Wright

Born in Fitzwilliam, N. H., April 3, 1829
Died in Putnam, Ct. May 2, 1918

Going, But Know Not Where

The quotation in the following may be found on many stones.

Norwalk, Conn.

Here lies the body of Mrs. Susannah Saint
John, the wife of Capt. Joseph
Saint John, who died Dec. 4, 1749, aged
40 yrs. and 2 mos.

She that lies at rest within this tomb
Had Rachel's face and Leah's fruitful womb,
Abigail's wisdom, Lydia's faithful heart,
With Martha's care, we hope Mary's better part.

The following is not all of the inscription, but the use of "inanimated" is unusual:

Highland Cemetery, Dover, N. H.

Joseph & Betsy Hartwell

Repository
of
Joseph Hartwell, Inanimated
April 7, 1867, Aet. 68
Betsy Hartwell, Inanimated
Dec. 7, 1862, Aet. 68

Hard to believe!

Silver Lake, N. Y.

Elizabeth McFadden
Wife of David P. Reid
Died Feb. 28, 1859
In her 47th year.

She never done a thing to displease her husband

Litchfield, Conn.

Here lies the body of Mrs. Mary, wife of
Deacon John Buel, Esq. She died Nov. 4, 1768,
aged 90—having had 13 children, 101 Grand-
children, 247 Grate-Grand children, and 49
Grate-Grate-Grand children; total 410.
Three Hundred and Thirty Six Survived Her.

One might add: "May she rest in peace!"

Shutesbury, Mass.

To the Four Husbands
Of Miss Ivy Saunders
1790, 1794, 1808, 18??

Here lies my husbands, One, Two, Three
Dumb as men could ever be;
As for my Fourth, well, praise be God
He bides for a little above the sod;
Alex, Ben, Sandy were the first three's names
And to make things tidy I'll add his—James.

Before the days of matrimonial bureaus?

Lincoln, Maine

Sacred to the Memory
of
Jared Bates
who died Aug. the 6th, 1800

His widow, aged 24, lives at
7 Elm Street, has every
qualification for a good wife,
and yearns to be comforted.

Suffolk, England

Jane Kitchen

Here lies Jane Kitchen
  Who, when her glass was spent,
She kickt up her heels
  And away she went!

Unhappy family affairs are suggested by the odd lines from the Presbyterian Churchyard at Banner Elk in the mountains of North Carolina. In 1892 stone markers were placed at the foot of the graves of Margaret A. and Shepard M. Dugger, wife and son of Mr. Dugger. They read:

For her:

"This was a woman, sir,
 But rests her soul, she's dead!"

For the son:

"This was a child that showed the man
As morning shows the day."

In 1938 Mr. Dugger, husband and father, died. A bronze plaque is on the tomb with an inscription he wrote for himself.

"Farewell friends, I am dead
But still I hear the birds sing,
See the wild flowers,
And start with you on the high mountains.
I loved little children and my wrongs
were the results of ignorance."

A departed wife left her own epitaph. It was a suicide note addressed to the husband, which he had carved on her stone.

Chestnut Hill Cemetery
Salisbury, N. C.

Elva F. Cox
Wife of H. M. Campbell

"Dear, should anything happen to me don't you worry. Don't forget to live a Christian life. I'll be waiting at the pearly gates just as anxious as the day I met you at the altar.

Goodbye, Dear
Elva."

Romance is associated with the inscription on the tombstone of Samuel McClary, Moravian God's Acre,

Winston-Salem, N. C. He was a merchant of Charleston, S. C., born in 1792, who died on a lover's visit to Winston-Salem, 1831. His sweetheart had a stone placed on his grave with the following inscription:

"Ah! Friend at home, and kindred dear!
If chance should bring you here,
Remember that his Lenora dear
Bedewed his grave with many a tear
September 10, 1831."

Incidentally, in this historic Moravian cemetery death is really a leveler; there are no grand tombs, no growing shrubs or flowers; the married women and married men are in separate divisions; the unmarried women and men, and the children, according to sex, all separated; and there is a "Stranger's Row." In this row Samuel McClary lies.

Warrenville, Ill.

Thomas Masskell Manning
Lawyer
Born Feb. 19, 1836 Died May 7, 1922
Mary D. Jones
His perfect wife
1839-1868
Walter Carlton, their son
1860-1862
Lucy Talbot
His second sweet wife
1839-1872
Mary E. Briggs
His healthful 3rd wife
1862-

Little Compton, R. I.

Two upright stones of the same size; on one:

In memory of Lidia ye wife of Mr. Simeon Palmer who died Dec. ye 26th, 1754 in ye 35th year of her age.

On the other:

In memory of Elizabeth, who should have been the wife of Mr. Simeon Palmer, who died August 14th 1776 in the 64th year of her age.

To the point:

Wolstanton, England

Ann Jennings

Some have children — some have none —
Here lies the mother of twenty-one.

Marital and statistical:

Creeton, Shropshire, England

On a Thursday she was born
On a Thursday made a bride,
On a Thursday put to bed,
On a Thursday broke her leg, and
On a Thursday died.

London, England

Mary Quinlivan
Died Nov. 11th, 1818, aged 23

21 years a Maid
16 months a Wife,
4 days a Mother,
And then ended life.

Wakefield, England

Her manners mild, her temper such;
Her language good, and not too much.

Blakemore Churchyard,
Herfordshire, England

26 years I lived single,
5 a married life;
Long time I was afflicted,
And then I lost my life.

Northampton, England

Susan Lee

Here lies the corpse of SUSAN LEE,
Who died of heartfelt pain.
Because she loved a faithless he
Who loved not her again.

No lack of love in this—for himself? Anyway, a compliment to himself is inscribed on his wife's tomb.

High Point, N. C.

And she said
"John, I'm proud of you
Living or dead."

Maybe the good Deacon had the 31st Chapter of Proverbs in mind: or do the 60 years say enough?

Dummerston, Vt.

Joanna Wilder

She fulfilled in a good degree the scripture
requirements of the
wife of a Deacon. She lived with her husband 60 years.

There is a rollicking mood in one from

Providence Churchyard, Graham, N. C.

Sallie Fonville

Sallie sounds the sacred shore;
She's gone, she's gone forever more.

There is something martial here:

Hollis, N. H.

Cynthia Stevens

Here lies Cynthia, Steven's wife,
She lived six years in calms and strife.
Death came at last and set her free,
I was glad and so was she.

Kilmurry Churchyard, Ireland

This stone was raised by Sarah's lord,
Not Sarah's virtues to record—
For they're well known to all the town—
But it was raised to keep her down.

Burlington, Mass.

Anthony Drake

Sacred to the memory of Anthony Drake,
Who died for peace and quietness sake;
His wife was constantly scolding and scoffin,
So he sought repose in a twelve dollar coffin.

Essex, England

Richard and Mary Prichard

Here lies the man Richard,
And Mary his wife,
Whose surname was Prichard:
They lived without strife,
And the reason was plain—
They abounded in riches,
They had no care nor pain,
And his wife wore the breeches.

Before the days of hospitals and visiting hours:

Boulder, Ill.

Alice Phillips

First and last wife of Thomas Phillips
Talked to death by friends

Suffolk, England

To free me from domestic strife
Death call'd at my house, but he spoke with my wife.

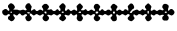
Susan, wife of David Pattison, lies buried here.
Oct. 19, 1706.

Stop reader, and if not in a hurry, shed a tear.

Give her credit for trying!

Forestville, N. C.

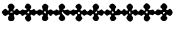
"Gone before me O my idol
To the Promised Land;
Vainly I look for another
In thy place to stand."



This you can believe:

Cornwall, England

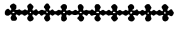
Beneath this stone lies Humphrey and Joan,
Who together rest in peace;
Living indeed
They disagreed,
But now all quarrels cease.



Canaan, N. H.

Amos Shute
1789-1842

He heard the angels calling him
From the Celestial Shore
He flapped his wings and away he went
To make one angel more.



Canaan, N. H.

Sarah Shute
1803-1840

Here lies, cut down like unripe fruit,
The wife of Deacon Amos Shute;
She died of drinking too much coffee,
Anno Dominy, Eighteen forty.

A rare sentiment!

Hamilton, Ohio

"One of the best mother-in-laws
God ever made."

Derbyshire, England

John Dale and his two wives

Know posterity, that on the 8th of April, in the year of grace 1757, the rambling remains of the above JOHN DALE were in the 86th yeare of his pilgrimage, laid upon his two wives.

This thing in life might raise some jealousy,
Here all three lie together lovingly,
But from embraces here no pleasure flows,
Alike are here all human joys and woes;
Here Sarah's chiding John no longer hears,
And old John's rambling Sarah no more fears;
A period's come to all their toylsome lives,
The good man's quiet; still are both his wives.

The following epitaph reminds one of a reported inscription on a New Englander's tomb:

"Here lies the father of 29
He would have had more
But he didn't have time."

But it is most interesting because of the addition made to it by Professor Lee M. Brooks of Chapel Hill, N. C. Professor Brooks had made a picture of the stone and the words on it haunted him until he found relief in poetry. The words:

St. Mary's Churchyard, Bedford, England

Here
Lies Interred the Body
of Patience, wife of Shadrach
Johnson. By her he had 12 sons and
12 daughters. She died in Childbed, 6th day of
June Anno 1717 Aged 38 years.

Prof. Brooks:

"Shadrach of Bedford, a dominant sire,
To have many children he'd go through fire;
And what patient mistress could wish for more
Than death after yielding him twenty-four."

Ribbesford, England

Anna Wallace

The children of Israel wanted bread
And the Lord sent them manna,
Old clerk Wallace wanted a wife,
And the Devil sent him Anna.

Ilfracombe, England

Catherine Parminster

Never was Innocence and Prudence
So lovely, that had you known her
Conversation, you would have said
She was the daughter of Eve before
She eated of the Apple.

She hath left her name
Catherine Parminster
A.D. 1661

Williamsburg, Va.

Hon. John Custis

Under this marble tomb lies the body
of Hon. John Custis, Esq.,
of the City of Williamsburg
and Parish of Bruton,
Formerly of Hungar's Parish on the
Eastern Shore
of Virginia and County of
Northampton,
Aged 71 years and yet lived but
seven years
Which was the space of time he kept
A Bachelor's House at Arlington
On the Eastern shore of Virginia.

"This inscription put on his tomb was by
his own positive orders."

The humor here lies in the flowery language so out of keeping with 1961!

Washington, N. C.

Sarah Bonner

Where flies my wife, oh lovely once, and fair,
Her face cast in the mold of beauty,
Where her eyes, all radiance; her cheeks like snow?
Those cheeks once tinctured with a purple glow.
Where those ivory teeth, and lips of celestial sound?

Her lips like lilies set with roses round.
Where that soft marble breast, white neck, and where
That all of woman past description fair?
Where those active fingers that with artful ease
In her house once sought her family to please?

Where that sprightly wit; even love's divine delight—
All sunk, alas, in everlasting night.
Earth take her bones; chaste soul she smiles at rest,
While her image lives immortal in my breast.

TRADES AND PROFESSIONS

WHEN LIVING TOGETHER was simpler, maybe more cooperative, certainly less complex, it seems that people took more pride in their work whether it was in a craft or in a profession. From a serious viewpoint much information about early occupations could be collected from grave stones. In England, especially, these occupational epitaphs are often long and revealing. The samples presented here embrace a variety of callings and illustrate many facets of human nature—irony, ridicule, sarcasm, whimsicality, and even rascality.

Lawyers, for some reason or other, have been the object of more sarcastic grave poetry than any other class.

Almost a regret that this hardy sailor had to die peacefully on shore!

Beaufort, N. C.

Capt. Wm. Harker 1790-1822

The form that fills this stilly grave
Once toss'd on ocean's roaring wave,
Plunged through its storms without dismay
And careless whirled in its spray;
Wreck, famine, exile, scatheless bore
Yet perished on this peaceful shore,
No tempest whelm'd him neath the surge;
No wailing seabird scream'd his dirge;
But Fever's silent, hidden flame
Consum'd by stealth his hardy frame
And softly as an infant's breath
He sank into the arms of Death.
The weatherbeaten Bark no more
Hangs shivering on a leeward shore
But wafted by a favouring wind
Life's stormy sea hath left behind
And into ports securely pass'd
Hath dropped its anchor there at last.

Beaufort, N. C.

Capt. John Hill
1817-1879

The form that fills this silent grave
Once tossed on ocean rolling wave,
But in a port securely fast
Has dropped his anchor here at last.

East Hampton, Conn.

Harry Rockwell
died 1883
Aged 89

Landsmen or sailors
For a moment avast
Poor Jack's main topsail
Is laid to the mast,
The worms gnaw his timbers
His vessel a wreck,
When the last whistle sounds,
He'll be up on deck.

Cape Cod, Mass.

Captain Thomas Coffin
Born Jan. 7, 1792 Died Jan. 10, 1842

He has finished catching cod,
And gone to meet his God.

A soldier of old who hated "to fade away!"

Westminster Abbey, London

Sir Francis Vere

(English commander in the Netherlands; died a few years after retirement, Aug. 28, 1608. Aged 53)

When Vere sought Death, arm'd with his sword and Shield,
Death was afraid to meet him in the field;
But, when his weapons he had laid aside,
Death, like a coward struck him, and he died.

From the day of ancient trade guilds down into the 19th century vocations, trades, and professions, heroic and daring deeds, and striking innovations have been played up on monuments by way of identifying and immortalizing the departed. For instance, an M.D. boldly proclaims his contribution to the practice of medicine—in three words. The epitaph is found in Beeman Cemetery, nine miles west of Wadesboro, N. C.

Dr. Parks T. Beeman
B. Dec. 4, 1833 D. May 23, 1903
"I Fed Fever"

A puzzling statement to the present generation, but intelligible in the doctor's time. It meant he was the first in that part of the country to feed typhoid fever patients rather than starve them.

A large boulder put up by the good doctor bears his own words:

Oak Grove Cemetery,
Pawtucket, R. I.

Rothwell

William P. Rothwell, M.D.
1866-1939

This is on me.
R.

For another M.D., also at Pawtucket, R. I.:

Dr. Thomas Bart
1803-1860

The operation was successful.

Norwich, England

Phoebe Crewe

In memory of Mrs. Phoebe Crewe
who died May 28, 1817, aged 77 years.
Who, during forty years practice
as a midwife in this city, brought
into the world 9,730 children.

Godalming, England

Nathaniel Godbold

Sacred to the memory of
Nathaniel Godbold, Esq.
Inventor & Proprietor of that
excellent medicine
THE VEGETABLE BALSAM
renowned for the cure of Consumption
and Asthma.
Died Dec. 17, 1799.
Died of fevers and Asthma.

A pallbearer of William Shakespeare! His claim upon fame:

Fredricksburg, Va.

Edward Helder

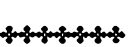
Here lies the body of EDWARD HELDER, practitioner in physic and chirurgery. Born in Bedfordshire, England, in the year of our Lord 1542. Was contemporary with, and one of the pall-bearers to the body of William Shakespeare. After a brief illness his spirit ascended in the year of our Lord 1618, aged seventy-six.

Lawyers, as suggested above, have been treated to plain-speaking inscriptions.

Episcopal Churchyard, New Bern, N. C.

To the memory of
Charles Elliott
An attorney General for this province
Who died Anno 1756

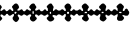
An Honest Lawyer Indeed



The following inscription (also at New Bern) is found on the gravestone of George Washington's private secretary, Portsmouth, N. H. Alexander Pope wrote the lines.

Malachi Haughton
Attorney at Law
B. 10 Dec. 1790
D. Sept. 8, 1847

A wit's a feather,
And a chief's a rod;
An honest man's the
Noblest work of God.



St. Bartholomew Church
London, England

William Shaw

Here lies William Shaw
An attorney at law;
If he is not blest,
What will become of all the rest?

Two from Edinburgh, Scotland; crisp, at least:

See how God works his wonders now and then—
Here lies a lawyer, and an honest man.

Here he lies as he always did.

St. Pancras Churchyard
Middlesex, England

Thomas Abbott

This stone is inscribed to the Memory of Mr. Thomas Abbott, of Swaffam, in the county of Norfolk,
attorney-at-law, who died lamented by his friends, (enemies he had none) after a painful and tedious illness, which he bore with patience, resignation, and fortitude becoming a man. Departed this life August the 16th, Anno Domini 1762, aged 48.

Here lieth one, believe it if you can,
Who, though an attorney was an honest man,
The gates of heaven for him shall open wide,
But will be shut 'gainst all the tribe beside.

Who knows but that Micah is a distant relative!

Cartleton, England

Micah Hall, Attorney-at-Law

What I was you know not—
What I am you know not.
Whither I am gone you know not—
Go about your business.

Hillsboro, N. C.

Judge William Norwood

This simple stone
What few vain marbles can,
May truly say,
Here lies an honest man.

An earlier G. B. Shaw, who made a life work of being a vegetarian:

Uley Churchyard, England

Roger Rutter

Underneath lies the remains of Roger Rutter,
alias Rudder, eldest son of John
Rutter, of Uley, who was buried August 30,
1771, aged 84 years, having never eaten flesh,
fish, or fowl, during the course of his long
life.

Vanbrugh was both architect and dramatist; he built Blenheim House; his architectural designs were usually characterized by heaviness, as that of Blenheim Towers, which explains his epitaph, written by a friend, Dr. Evans.

Walbrook, England

Sir John Vanbrugh
Died March 26, 1726,
Aged 60 Years.

Underneath this stone, reader survey
Dead Sir John Vanbrugh's house of clay;
Lie heavy on him, earth! for he
Laid many heavy loads on thee.

This epitaph of another architect has an arresting phrase in it which possibly applies to more than one "pious" man.

York, Maine

In memory of
Major Samuel Sewall
An Architect of the first class,
From whose fabrications great benefits
have resulted to society;
He was benevolent, hospitable, and
generous, without ostentation
and pious without enthusiasm.

He died July 23rd, 1818. Aet. 91

Oliver Goldsmith wrote the following for a bookman:

London, England

Here lies poor Ned Purdon, from misery freed,
Who long was a bookseller's hack;
He led such a damnable life in this world
I don't think he'll wish to come back.

Hampton Ridware,
Staffordshire, England

Thomas Allestree

Underneath lies the body of Thomas Allestree, M. A., late rector of this parish, who was minister of the Church of England 54 years. He composed 500 sermons and preached them above 5,000 times. He died 30th day of June, 1715, in 78th year of his age.

Yorkshire, England

Hurrah! My Boys, at the Parson's fall,
For if he'd lived he'd a buried us all!

The gentleman was an actor:

Abbey Church, Bath, England

Here lies the body of
Mr. James Quinn.

The scene is chang'd—I am no more,
Death's the last act—now all is o'er.

Of course bankers would come in for some plain speaking. Even banker Newland wrote his own "last words."

London, England

Abraham Newland
(Cashier of the Bank of England)

Beneath this stone old Abraham lies;
Nobody laughs and nobody cries.
Where he has gone, and how he fares,
Nobody knows and nobody cares.

New York

Here lies old twenty per cent,
The more he got the less he spent,
The more he got the more he craved,
If he's gone to heaven we'll all be saved.

Manchester, England

John Hill

Here lies John Hill
A man of skill,
His age was five times ten;
He ne'er did good
Nor ever would
Had he liv'd as long again.

Edenton, N. C.

Here lie the remains of his relative's pride;
By water he lived, by water he died;
Though by water he fell, yet by water he'll rise,
By water baptismal attaining the skies.

Bennett's Cemetery,
Canisteo, N. Y.

Thial Clark

In memory of
Thial Clark, the Jeweler, who has quit running but is wound up in hopes of being taken in hand by the Supreme Master machinist for repairs and to be adjusted and set running for the world to come again.

So mote it be.

Longfellow's "Village Blacksmith" is not more to the point than these lines from Norton, Mass.:

In memory of
Mr.
JOSEPH HILL
who died
Dec. 6, 1826,
Aged 66 years

My sledge & hammer lay reclined,
My bellows too have lost their wind,
My fire's extinct, my forge's decayed
And in the dust my voice is laid.
My iron's spent, my coals are gone,
My nails are drove, my work is done.

Windsor, Maine

Richard Thomas

Here lies the body of Richard Thomas,
An Englishman by birth
A Whig of '76
By occupation a cooper
Now food for worms
Like an old rum puncheon
Marked, numbered and shooked.
He will be raised again
And finished by his creator.
He died Sept. 28, 1824, aged 75.
America my adopted country
My best advice to you is this
Take care of your liberties.

Stoke Churchyard, England

John Fry

An undertaker, named John Fry,
Lies here—who lost his breath,
Endeavoring, but in vain, to fly
That overtaker—Death.

The occupation is not unusual but preparation of his own grave was exceptional.

Dorchester, Mass.

Daniel Davenport

Died 1860

This grave was dug and finished
in the year 1833
by
DANIEL DAVENPORT
When he had been sexton
in Dorchester
twenty-seven years,
had attended 1135 funerals,
and dug 734 graves.

As a sexton with my spade I learned
To delve beneath the sod;
Where body to the earth returned,
But spirit to its God.
Years twenty-seven this toil I bore,
And midst deaths oft was spared.
Seven hundred graves and thirty-four I dug.
Then mine prepared.
And when at last I too must die
Someone else the bell will toll;
As here my mortal relics lie,
May heaven receive my soul.

The following colorful epitaph is on the tomb of Peter Isnel, Clerk of Crayford Parish for thirty years. The monument was erected by his friends, who also wrote the verses. He died March 31, 1811, on his way to church, aged 70 years.

Crayford, England

Peter Isnel

The Life of this Clerk was just threescore and ten
Nearly half of which time he had sung out Amen.
In his youth he was married like other young men,
But his Wife died one day, so he chanted Amen.
A second he took—she departed—what then?
He married and buried a third with Amen;
Thus his joys and his sorrows were Treble, but then
His voice was deep Bass, so he sung out Amen;
On the Horn he could blow as well as most men,
So his Horn was exalted in blowing Amen.
But he lost all his wind after threescore and ten
And here with three Wives he waits till Again
The Trumpet shall rouse him to sing out Amen.

Beaufort, N. C.

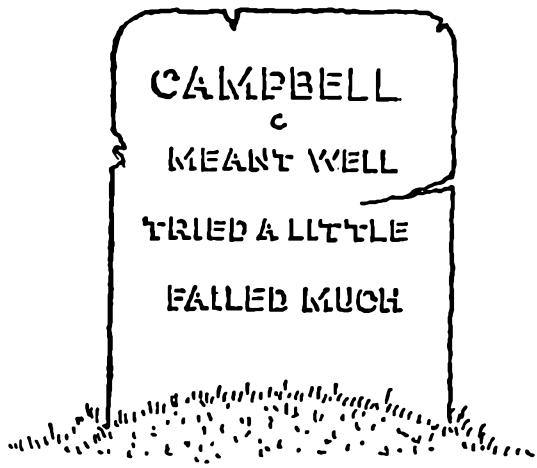
Rev. J. T. Arrington
Born Louisburg 1858
Died Beaufort 1881
While Pastor of this Church

In death he sang the "Old Ship
of Zion" and with the triumphal song
crossed the river to join the singers
on the other side.

Lincoln, England

John Hyde

Here lies John Hyde;
He first liv'd, and then he died;
He dyed to live, and liv'd to dye,
And hopes to live eternally.



SERMONS ON STONES

THE INFLUENCE of the ministry has always been significant but never more dominant than in Puritan New England; so, in the writing of epitaphs, religious ideas and emotions have been most potent. The tombstone was thought to be a good pulpit; the solemnity of nature's auditorium being heightened by the cedars, willows, and cypress; and surely the voices from the graves would be arresting and convincing. Of course many creedal angles are presented, and, rarely, a denial of all creeds. The moralizing and preaching often takes the line of warning the living to prepare for dying.

We should remember that there have been times, many centuries, indeed, when the emphasis of the minister was upon Judgment Day, when hell was played up to frighten men into heaven. Possibly the most

powerful sermon of the great Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758, was entitled: "A Sinner in the Hands of an Angry God." The most widely read, believed-in and memorized poem of early America was written by Reverend Michael Wigglesworth: "The Day of Doom —A Poetical Description of the Great and Last Judgment." It is a poem full of fire and brimstone; full of frightful ideas, including infant damnation, election, predestination, and eternal combustion.

Plymouth, Mass.

Consecrated to the memory of Mrs. Peggy Holbrook wife of Mr. Jeremiah Holbrook who departed this life August 28th 1811 aged 26 years.

Her amiable Disposition endeared her to her friends and died lamented by all who knew her.

"Though harsh the stroke and most severe the rod
Cease murmur cease it was a strike from God."

Plymouth, Mass.

Miss Sally C. Robbins

dau'r of Capt. Samuel & Mrs. Sarah Robbins. She deceased by a fall from a chaise, Aug 14, 1828, aged 25 years, 5 mo's and 10 days.

Our home is in the grave;
Here dwells the multitude; we gaze around,
We read their monuments, we sigh and
While we sigh, we sink.

East Thompson, Conn.

Jonathan Richardson
1872, aged 82

Who never sacrificed his reason at the
altar of superstition's God, and never
believed that Jonah swallowed the whale.

Riverside Cemetery
Asheville, N. C.

Campbell

"Meant well, tried a little, failed much."

New Bern, N. C.

Poor he lived
Poor he died
Poor he was buried
And nobody cried.

St. Margaret's Churchyard
Ipswich, England

Mary Burgess

Died Dec. 25, 1825, aged 58

Reader! Pass on, ne'er waste your time
On bad biography, or bitter rhyme:
For what I am, this cumbrous clay insures,
And what I was is no affair of yours.

Surry, N. H.

Lucina Wilcox

In memory of Miss
Lucina Wilcox, who
Died May 7th 1800
aged 20 years.

Death is a debt
By nature due;
I've paid my shot
And so must you.

In a similar philosophical strain this from Fayetteville, N. C.:

Robert Adam
Merchant, died 1801, aet. 42

Stranger, welcome to this scene;
The last in nature's course;
The first in wisdom's thought.

Orient, Maine

William Deering
Aged 49 years
Died 1839

For me the world hath had its charms,
And I've embraced them in my arms,
Courted its joys and sought its bliss,
Although I knew the end was this.

There are several variations of the following from Pope found in our cemeteries:

St. James Churchyard
Wilmington, N. C.

Slave to no sect
No private path he trod;
But looked through nature
Up to nature's God.

From the same Wilmington churchyard, and from Pope:

William Hunt
Died June 7, 1757, 19th year of his age

"How loved, how valued once, avails Thee not;
To whom related or by whom begot;
A lump of dust alone remains of Thee;
It's all thou art and all the proud shall be."

This from the English poet, James Montgomery:

St. James Churchyard
Wilmington, N. C.

Robert Edens
D. 1837 age 44

Friend after friend departs,
Who has not lost a friend?
There is no union here of hearts
That finds not here an end.
Were this frail world our final rest,
Living or dying, none were blest.

Fayetteville, N. C.

John H. Hall
1788-1867

Why seek ye the living among the dead?

Plymouth, Mass.

Lilly Wilson
Died April 3, 1809
Aged 68 years

"Our life is ever on the wing
And death is ever nigh
The moment when our lives begin
We all begin to die."

Charleston, S. C.

"Reader, I've left this world, in which
I had a world to do;
Sweating and fretting to get rich:—
Just such a fool as you."

St. Peter's Mancroft,
Norwich, England

Sarah Byfield

Death is a market where all must meet,
It's found in every city, town, and street.
If we our lives like merchandise could buy,
The rich would ever live, the poor alone must die.

Castle Street
Hull, England

John Bywater

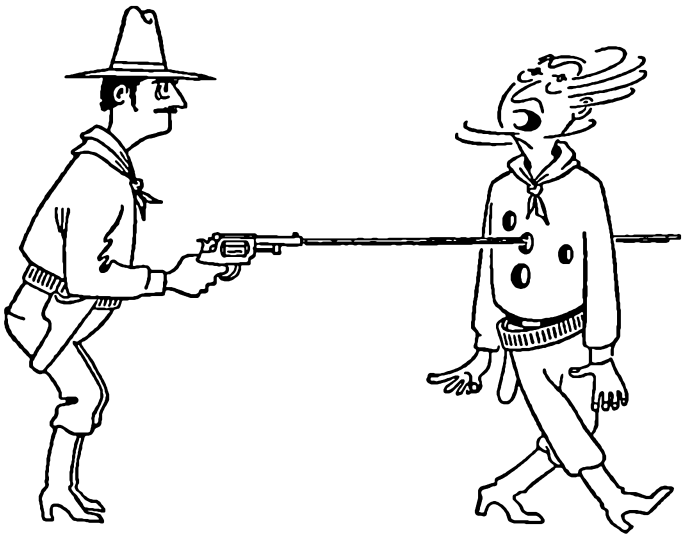
In memory of John, the son of
John and Ann Bywater
Died 25th January, 1815, aged 14 years

Life's like an Inn, where Travellers stay,
Some only breakfast and away;
Others to dinner stay and are full fed;
The oldest only sup and go to bed;
Long is the bill who lingers out the day,
Who goes the soonest has the least to pay.

Granary Burial Ground,
Boston, Mass.

Edwart Carter
Died Nov. 11, 1742
Aged 45

Farewell vain world I have had enough of thee;
Hark now I'm careless what thou say'st of me;
What Faults thou see'st in me
Take care to shun;
There's work within thy self
That should be Done.
Thy smiles I cravest not nor thy frowns I fear;
My cares are past, my head lies quiet here.



SUDDEN DEPARTURES

UNFORTUNATELY our familiarity with violence breeds a degree of indifference to it. In the horse and buggy days, however, folks were not so used to sudden disaster, and when the death of one was sudden or unusual the fact would likely be noted on the tombstone.

Cumberland County, N. C.

The pearly gates were opened wide—
A gentle voice said, 'Come'—
No farewell words were spoken—
She calmly entered home.

Enosburg, Vt.

In memory of
Anna Hopewell

Here lies the body of our Anna
Done to death by a banana
It wasn't the fruit that laid her low
But the skin of the thing that made her go.

Providence, R. I.

Hear Lyes
Sidney Snyder
1803-1823

The wedding day decided was,
The wedding wine provided
But 'ere the day did come along
He'd drunk it up and died, did.

Ah, Sidney! Sidney!

Princess Anne Co., Va.

Here lies the body of Henry Moore
Who got in the way of a 44.

Rutland, Ga.

This poor
fellow
Talked too
much

New Boston, N. H.

Sevilla
daughter of
George & Sarah
Jones
Murdered by
Henry N. Sargent
Jan. 13, 1854
Aet. 17 yrs, & 9 mos.

Thus fell this lovely blooming daughter
By the revengeful hand, a malicious Henry
When on her way to school he met her
And with a six self cocked pistol shot her.

"Malicious Henry" shot himself the same day, but was denied burial by the girl's grave. His epitaph near by reads:

Henry N.

Son of Daniel and
Charlotte Sargent
Died Jan. 13, 1854
Aet 23 yrs & 5 Mos
Murderer of
Sevilla Jones

Fawley Churchyard,
N. Hampshire

William Mansbridge

Stop, reader, pray and read my fate
What caused my life to terminate
For thieves by night when in my bed
Broke in my house and shot me dead.

Wrangell, Alaska

Moses Shakes

In Memory of
Moses Shakes
Son of
Chief Shakes
Aged 23 y
Was Murdered Here 12 or
13 Day of May 1911 A
Christian The Chief
Decide to Be Silenc
And Not Go On Warpath
I Live To Pruve The
Guilty Party

Cripple Creek, Col.

He called
Bill Smith
A Liar

Durham, England

Beneath these stones repose the bones
Of Theodosious Grimm,
He took his beer from year to year,
And then his bier took him.

The minister was killed by lightning:

Oak Level Presbyterian Churchyard
Vernon Hill, Va.

Rev. Oscar B. Wilson
Born
March 4, 1866
Translated
April 16, 1900

Girard, Pa.

Ellen Shannon
Aged 26 years
Who was Fatally Burned
March 21st 1870
By the explosion of a lamp
filled with "R. E. Danforth's
Non-Explosive Burning Fluid."

Fairview, Va.

Rev. Horace Dudley Brown
Fell at his post
Having preached with
great power and effect
at night, he passed to
His reward about four
o'clock next morning

Ithaca, N. Y.

While on earth my knee was lame
I had to nurse and heed it.
But now I am at a better place
Where I don't even need it.

Williamsport, Pa.

Sacred to the memory of
Henry Harris
Born June 27th 1821 of Henry Harris
and Jane his wife.
Died on the 4th of May, 1831, by the kick of
a colt in his bowels.

Peaceable and quiet, a friend to
his father and mother, and respected
by all who knew him, and went
to the world where horses do not
kick, where sorrow and weeping
is no more.

He was a drinking fiddler!

Castle Caldwell, Lough Erne, Ireland

To the
Memory of
Dennis McCabe, Fidler,

Who fell out of the St. Patrick Barge, belonging to Sir James Caldwell, Bart., and Count of Milan, and was drowned off this Point, August ye 13, 1770.

Beware ye fidlers of ye fidler's Fate
Nor tempt ye deep lest ye repent too late
Ye ever have been deemed to water foes
Then shun ye lake till it with whiskey floes
On firm land only exercise your skill
There ye may play and drink your fill.

Burlington, Mass.

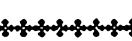
Susan Lowder

Here lies the body of Susan Lowder
Who burst while drinking Seidlitz powder;
Called from this world to her heavenly rest
She should have waited till it effervesced.

Like boarding a train:

New York

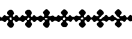
She was in health at 11:30 A. M.
And left for Heaven at 3:30 P. M.



It happens every winter:

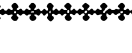
Fairfax, Vt.

O fatal gun, why was it him
That you should kill so dead?
Why didn't you go off a little higher
And fire above his head?



Kent, England

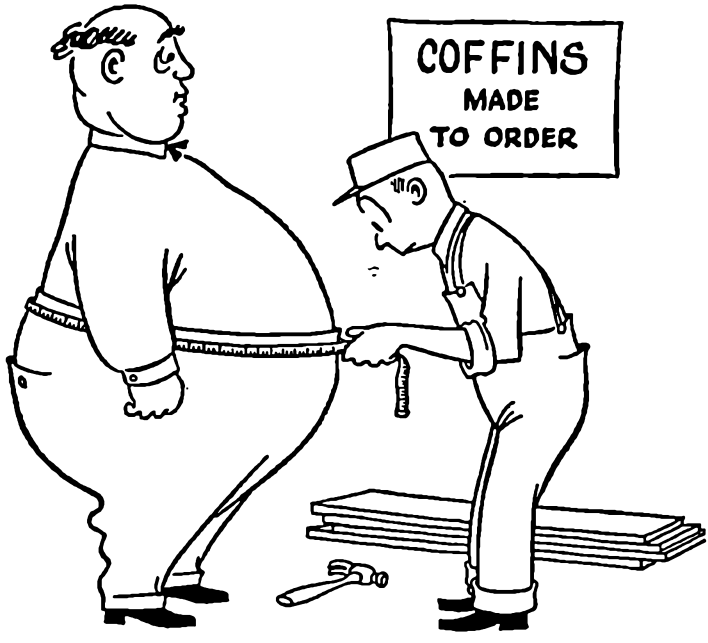
Grim Death took me without warning,
I was well at night,
And dead at nine in the morning.



Over a sailor's grave:

Beaufort, N. C.

There was no more sea.



ODDITIES

THE ABOVE CAPTION applies in a way to this entire collection; still, the other captions would not, I think, cover the range of the following oddities or peculiarities. If a person were peculiar in looks, odd in his behavior, mysterious in his life, a crank in any manner, he ran the risk of having his strangeness memorialized in stone. Hawthorne and other writers have dealt with such characters in fiction; and so have "last words" dealt with human aberrations, even physical defects, like a prominent wart. On the tombstone of John

Milledge, North Branford, Conn., it would seem that the man's walk as well as his wart are remembered.

Our father lies beneath this sod
His spirit's gone to meet his God
We never more shall hear his tread
Nor see the wen upon his head.

Possibly the most unusual, fantastic, even macabre assembly of monuments is to be found at Mayfield, Ky. It is the family plot of Col. Henry G. Wooldridge, who died 1899, aged 77. The dozen life-size stone images, not counting the animals, make a startling impression; they stand in granite stiffness, in close formation, facing east. The Colonel is represented by two statues: in one he stands high on his pedestal looking beyond his tomb and in the other he sits upon his Kentucky thoroughbred; and in both he commands the scene. To his front, his side, and back stand his mother, four brothers, three sisters, two nieces. A deer, a pet fox, and two hounds complete the stone assembly: all at rigid attention as if they were posing for a photographer. It is an oddity or curiosity that draws thousands to Maplewood Cemetery.

Vienna, La.

In this small community churchyard five miles north of Ruston, La., is to be found this, in an unusual sense, factual inscription:

"James H. Mays, Born in Lincoln County, Georgia, November 17, 1821. Died in Ruston, Louisiana, August 9, 1911. Born spiritually October 18, 1839, Under No Eyes Save the Lord's and My Horse's. Joined the Methodist Church on September 1, 1839, and Feel that I have been an Unworthy Member Since, But Hope to join the Redeemed Above in the First Resurrection."

"Dictated by the Deceased."

Hawfields Presbyterian Church
Haw River, N. C.

John W. Craig
1816-1888

Tread softly o'er this
sacred spot
Beneath lies one not
yet forgot
It is our father

Folk ways are evident in epitaphs expressing social and political resentment. For instance (note misspelling):

Troy, N. C.

Edgar Haywood, 1878-1933.
Murdered
The muderer shielded by local
officers and politicians.

Over the grave of one who was executed by the State:

Spray, N. C.

"Murdered by the State of North Carolina"

Thyatira Churchyard
Near Mooresville, N. C.

A much beloved young lady had married against her grandmother's wishes; the girl died about a year after

the marriage and the grandmother erected a tombstone, merely giving the girl's first name and this inscription:

"The former things are passed away."

St. Martin's, Stamford, England

Daniel Lambert

In remembrance of that prodigy in nature,
DANIEL LAMBERT,
a native of Leicester,
Who was possessed of an excellent convivial mind, and in personal greatness had no competitor. He measured three feet one inch round the leg, nine feet four inches round the body, and weighed 52 stones 11 lbs. [739 pounds!] He departed this life on the 21st of June, 1809, aged 39 years.

As a testimony of respect, this stone was erected by his friends in Leicester.

Lee, Mass.

Mrs. Alpha White, weight 309 pounds

Open wide ye golden gates
That lead to the heavenly shore,
Our father suffered in passing through
And mother weighs much more.

Vancouver, Wash.

A jovial old atheist by the name of Arthur Haine requested that he be buried without benefit of the church. His monument bears two words:

Haine
haint

An important question:

Devonshire, England

Dear parents, now do not lament
My irksome days on earth are spent;
Medical aid was all in vain.
I hope for my eternal gain;
My tombstone now you chance to spy,
The question is: Now where am I?

Pleasant Grove Baptist Church
Near Raleigh, N. C.

Rebecca Jones
Wife of G. H. Alford
Born March 18th 1822
Died August 6th 1890
Aged 68 years.

A devoted Christian Mother
Who whipped Sherman's Bummers
With scalding water while
Trying to take her dinner pot,
Which contained a ham-bone,
Being cooked for her soldier boys.

Mt. Auburn, Cambridge, Mass.

Here lies a man beneath this sod,
Who slandered all except his God
And Him he would have slandered, too,
But that his God he never knew.

Fogo Churchyard
Berwickshire, England

Here lyes the body and the banes
Of the Laird of Whinkerstanes;
He was neither gud to rich nor puir,
But now the de'il has him sure.

Kenosha Cemetery, Wis.

The following unusual epitaphs, written by the husband for himself and his wife, are quite outspoken as to religious convictions:

SUSAN P. FOSTER
wife of
LEWIS KNAPP

My dear and loving wife, meet me, with our spirit friends, at the gate of the Elysian Fields of Paradise, where I am coming by Nature's fast express. Until there we meet, a loving adieu.

P.S.—Our friends W. and A. will soon join us there.

LEW.

Happy! Happy day! Hallelujah!
Amen!
Old Broadgauge
LEWIS KNAPP
aged —— years,
Emigrated ———,
to join his wife and other friends in the Celestial Fields of Paradise, thanking God for sense enough to die as He had lived for thirty years, thoroughly infidel to all

ancient and modern humbug-myths as taught for fine clothes and place, at other cost, by an indolent, egotistic, self-elected Priestly Crew.

The fear of the Right Reverend Doctors of Divinity theological scare-crow of Hellfire and Damnation to all who refuse to pay tithes to their support, had no force or effect on Lewis Knapp.

Something of a riddle here:

Clemmons, N. C.

John Riddle
Died 1826, aged 42

His days were fun,
His pleasures less;
Blame not his haste
to happiness.

Trinity Churchyard,
New York City

Made by himself:

Sidney Breese
June 9, 1767

Ha Sidney, Sidney,
Lyest thou here?
I here lye
Till time is flown
To its eternity

Ever higher!

Armagh, Ireland

Dr. Hugh Boulter, Archbishop of Armagh, Ireland
He was born Jan. 4th, 1671,
He was created Bishop of Bristol, 1718,
He was translated to the Archbishoprick of
Armagh, 1723,
And from thence to Heaven,
Sept. 27, 1742.

Beaufort, N. C.

Charlie B.
son of
Levi T. and Mary A. Woe
Born
May 28, 1896
Died
July 25, 1921

Killed by Ball Accident
Gone but not forgotten

Newburyport, Mass.

Robert Adams

Here is interred
Robert Adams who
Departed this life
March ye 5th 1773
In the 71st year
of his Age
For near 12 years

This man An Asthma Had
Above Ten years
He Was Not in A Bed
He to murmer
Was Never Heard By Won
But waited Patient
Till His Change Did Come.

Bradford, Vt.

Mary Sumner Hoyt

She lived!
What more can there be said?
She died
And all we know, she's dead.

Ballyporen, Ireland

Teague O'Brian

Here I at length repose,
My spirit now at aise is;
With the tips of my toes
And the point of my nose
Turned up to the roots of the daisies.

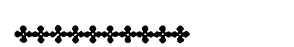
Homersfield, England

Myself

As I walked by myself I talked to myself
And thus myself said to me,

Look to thyself and take care of thyself
For nobody cares for thee.
So I turned to myself and I answered myself
In the self-same reverie
Look to myself or look not to myself
The self-same thing will it be.

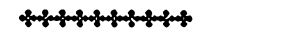
1810 Robert Crytoft Aged 90



Confederate Cemetery
Savannah, Ga.

P. Fell

A Republican
A consistent politician
And strictly honest man.

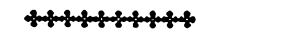


Bethel Cemetery, St. Louis, Mo.

B. H. Morris

Died April, 1900

"Kind friends
I leave behind
Cast your votes
For Wm. J. Bryan"



Baton Rouge, La.

Here lies the body of David Jones.
His last words were: "I die a Christian
and a Democrat."

Easingwold, England

Anne Harrison

Anne Harrison, well-known by the name of Nanna Ran Dan, who was chaste but no prude; and tho' free was no harlot. By principle virtuous, by education a Protestant; her freedom made her liable to censure, while her extensive charities made her esteemed. Her tongue she was unable to control, but the rest of her members she kept in subjection. After a life of eighty years thus spent, she died, 1745.

Aberdeen, N. C.

Colin Bethune
Born in Scotland
Of necessity
But an American Citizen
By Choice.

Savannah, Ga.

Here lies old Rastus Sominy
Died a-eating hominy
In 1859 anno domini.

Chattanooga, Tenn.

I came into this world
Without my consent
And left in the same manner.

Someone who knew about such ways wrote an epitaph, appropriate but unused:

"Here lies So and So,
Who always pledged
And never paid"

There are a few epitaphs, however, in which sums of money given to the church are mentioned. Like this one:

Buffalo Presbyterian Church
Greensboro, N. C.

James Creswell

Who died A. D. 1822 in the 76 year of his age leaving 100 dollars to the N. Buffalo Church.

Great Walford, England

Here old John Randall lies
Who counting from his tale
Lived three score years and ten,
Such virtue was in Ale.
Ale was his meat
Ale was his drink,
Ale did his heart revive.
And if he could have drunk his Ale
He still had been alive:
But he died January five 1699.

Many reasons have been given for a long life!

Edwalton, England

Rebecca Freland
D. 1741

She drank good ale, strong punch and wine,
And lived to the age of ninety-nine.

One of the most famous of "drinking" epitaphs is that of Thomas Tetcher, Winchester, England.

In memory of
Thomas Tetcher,

A Grenadier in the North Regiment of Hants Militia, who died of a violent fever contracted by drinking small beer when hot
the 12th of May, 1764, aged 26 years.

In grateful remembrance of whose universal goodwill towards his comrades this stone is placed here at their expense, as a small testimony of their regard and concern.

"Here sleeps in peace a Hampshire Grenadier,
Who caught his death by drinking cold small beer;
Soldiers, be wise from his untimely fall,
And when ye're hot drink strong, or not at all."

This memorial, being decayed, was restored by the officers of the garrison, A. D. 1781:

"An honest soldier never is forgot,
Whether he die by musket or by pot."

This stone was placed by the North Hant Militia, when disembodied at Winchester, on 26th April, 1802, in consequence of the original stone being destroyed.

Middleford, Mass.

Thomas Mulvaney
1724-1795

Old Thomas Mulvaney lies here
His mouth ran from ear to ear
Reader, tread lightly on this wonder
For if he yawns you're gone by thunder.

Bunhill Fields, London

Here lies
Dame Mary Page
Relict of Sir Gregory Page
Bart.

She departed this life
March 4, 1728
in the 56th year of her age.

In 67 months she was tapped 66 times. Had taken away 240 gallons of water without even repining at her case, or even fearing the operation.

St. David's Episcopal Church
Cheraw, S. C.

"My name, my country
What are they to thee
What, whether high or low
My pedigree?
Perhaps I far surpassed
All other men:
Perhaps I fell below them all,
What then?
Suffice it Stranger,
Thou see'st a TOMB,
Thou knowest its use:
It hides—no matter whom."

As a matter of local records, it hides William Robbins, a leading attorney and philanthropic citizen, who died about 1842. The epitaph was copied by Robbins from one in Westminster Abbey, London, which was written by the poet, William Cowper.

Preston, England

An interesting bit of etymology is revealed in this inscription on the grave of a hawker of fish:

Richard Turner

Beneath this stone are deposited the remains of RICHARD TURNER, author of the word Teetotal, as applied to abstinence from all intoxicating liquors, who departed this life on the 27th day of October, 1846, aged 56 years.

A seller of strong drinks gives some advice from his tombstone:

Oneco, Conn.

Alonzo P. Love
1854-1908

VOTE NO LICENSE

It used to be a ritual, this change from winter to spring!

Medway, Mass.

In memory of Mr.
Peter Daniels
Born Aug 7, 1688
Dyed May 20, 1746

Beneath this stone,
A lump of clay,
Lies Uncle Peter Daniels
Who too early
In the month of May
Took off his winter flannels.

Leominster, Mass.

The monument shows the face of the deceased adorned by a luxurious beard.

Joseph Palmer
d. Oct. 30, 1873
aged 84 years, 5 mos.

"Persecuted for wearing the beard."

Pinckneyville, S. C.

Unless it is an old map you cannot find Pinckneyville, S. C., listed; for this once thriving capital of the Pinckney District of Union County has only a dilapidated tavern, a disintegrating jail, and a tomb to represent its past glory. The tomb now fighting nature for survival was once in the center of the town, where its occupant wished to be buried so that a fellow townsman, his enemy, would be reminded daily of "the wrong he did me." The grave is marked by an expensive marble slab.

Thomas C. Taylor

Sacred to the memory of Thomas C. Taylor

Born in Ireland, 25 March 1776, died at
Pinckneyville, South Carolina, 19 June 1832,
In the 57th year of his life.

"Silent grave to thee I trust
This precious part of worthy dust;
Keep it safe, O sacred tomb,
Until a wife shall ask for room."

Westminster Abbey, London, England

In the famous Poet's Corner of this historical abbey one would not miss the short epitaph,

"O Rare Ben Jonson,"

but in contemplating the monument, with its masks of Comedy and Tragedy, one might not notice that the buttons on the coat of the marble bust are on the wrong side. Which error brought forth some lines from Rev. Samuel Wesley:

"O Rare Ben Jonson,—what a Turn-Coat grown:
Thou ne'er were such, till thou wert clad in stone.
When time thy Coat, thy only Coat impairs
Thou'lt find a patron in a hundred years.
Then let not this mistake disturb thy sprite,
Another age shall set thy Buttons right."

LAMBS AND ROSEBUDS

THE MOST COMMON stone figure found on infants' graves is that of a recumbent lamb. You will find this symbol in all the older graveyards. Indeed, in some graveyards, like the one in Scotland Neck, N. C., there are so many of these lambs lying about that one for a moment forgets the tragedy beneath the scene and smiles at the large array of these symbols. The words frequently used in the inscriptions for children are "rose," "rosebud," "sunbeam," and "gem."

Infant mortality was all too common and tragic in colonial times, and later; so, the humor found on children's gravestones is rather subdued, and it arises out of the difference between our thinking and writing and that of two hundred-odd years ago. Then, the ringing phrases, the brightly colored word pictures, the grandiose perorations of the orator moved people to dizzy emotional heights; now, the same speaker would move us to smile, even to laughter. Thus many epitaphs, especially those for the very young, are expressed in a language and style that went out with the old-time preacher and orator.

The following eleven epitaphs were copied from gravestones on Burial Hill, Plymouth, Mass. The names and dates have been omitted; the laconic inscriptions speak for themselves. Variations of several

of these are to be found in many graveyards, here and in England. They are offered here as examples of a style, as being representative of a past era. Some are beautiful—all are sad.

Plymouth, Mass.

Since I have been so quickly done for
I wonder what I was begun for.

Plymouth, Mass.

I woke up took a peep
Didn't like what I saw
So I went back to sleep.

Plymouth, Mass.

He glanced into the world to see
A sample of our misery.

Plymouth, Mass.

Died when young and full of promise
Of whooping cough our Thomas.

Plymouth, Mass.

He listen'd for a while to hear
Our mortal griefs; then tun'd his ear
To angel harps and songs, and cried
To join their notes celestial, sighed and dyed.

Plymouth, Mass.

What did the little hasty Sojourner
find so forbidding and
disgustful in our upper world to
occasion
its precipitant exit.

Plymouth, Mass.

This one has a double meaning:

We cannot have all things to please us.
Poor little Tommy's gone to Jesus.

Plymouth, Mass.

As young as beautiful! and soft as young!
And gay as soft! and innocent as gay!

Plymouth, Mass.

Two priceless gems have passed from me
Their settings too were rare;
Reset in Heaven, those gems will be,
To shine forever there. 1855.

Plymouth, Mass.

There is an hour when I must die
How do I know how soon 'twill come;
A thousand children young as I
Are called by death to meet their doom.

Plymouth, Mass.

Stop traveller and shed a tear
Upon the sod of children dear

Eley Cathedral Churchyard, England

Maria Scott
Died April, 1836, aged 7

The cup of life just with her lips she prest
Found the taste bitter, and declined the rest.
Averse: then turning from the face of day,
She softly sighed her little soul away.

An example of the more elaborate child's memorial:

Halifax, N. C.

The grave of
Mary Mountford Jones
The child of
Willie and Mary Jones
She was born
August 21st 1788
And died June 29th 1791

Venus gave all the graces,
Pallas formed the Mind;
With rival art to make the
First of woman kind,
Jove, of his wondrous work
Too soon enamoured grew,
Sent the Stern Tyrant Death
And claimed her for his own.
The Spirit soar'd to Jove,
The fine cold senseless clay
Shin'd in flight of Death
As bright as Orient day.

Scotland Neck, N. C.

Our Little Sunbeam

"A Disconsolate Mother" chose lines from Joseph Addison as a memorial for "a favorite and only child":

Washington, N. C.

Arabella Fohey
Who went
Where no traveler returns
Oc. 28th, 1803
Aged 2 years and 58 days

The soul, secure in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
The stars shall fade away—the sun himself
Grow dim with age and nature sink in vain—
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of nature and the crash of world.

Plymouth, N. C.

Mary Stout
D. 1857
Aged 1 yr. 3 mos. 24 days

Gone: like a meteor that o'er head
Suddenly shines, and ere we've said
"Look, look, how beautiful!" 'tis fled.

Edenton, N. C.

I was my father's son, tender and
only beloved in the sight of my mother.

Fayetteville, N. C.

Mary Clay MacMaster
Age 1 yr.
Blushed into dawn and passed away

The following six epitaphs from an old cemetery at Greenville, N. C., are typical of the phrases used for children:

She took the cup of life to sip,
Too bitter tears to drain;
She meekly put it from her lips
And went to sleep again.

Another sweet flower blossoms in heaven.

A finer bud of promise never bloomed.

Those whom God loves die young.

A sweeter, fairer bud of promise never bloomed.

Budded on earth to bloom in heaven.

An unintended smile: but factual!

Portland, Maine

The little hero that lies here
Was conquered by diarrhea.

Massachusetts

Henry Wilkins Glyn
Aged 3 days and 7 hours

After a long and painful illness, which he bore with Christian fortitude, this youthful martyr departed to his rest.

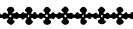
Also factual!

Burlington, Vt.

Beneath this stone our baby lays,
He neither crys nor hollers,
He lived just one and twenty days
And cost us forty dollars.

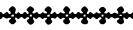
New Bern, N. C.

Ingenuous youth, thou art laid in dust
Yet Joseph Moodey's name continue must.



Salisbury, Conn.

Died October 13, 1808, infant child
of Abraham Nott,
Age 3 weeks. Supposedly pining
after clams.

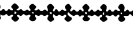


More modern this:

Oto, Iowa

B. B. Rogers

Dear B. B. you have gone to rest
Where no teacher
Can you molest.



Over the graves of two children:

Chapel Hill, N. C.

Our two sunbeams have vanished forever.

These lines were written for an infant by Coleridge:

St. James Churchyard
Wilmington, N. C.

Ere sin could blight
Or sorrow fade
Death came with friendly care
The opening bud to heaven conveyed
And bade it blossom there.

Starkville, Miss.

He couldn't get what he wanted from us;
So he went to Jesus.

Bayfield, Wis.

Basil, child of Joseph Davis and Fleuvis Davis
Died August 4, 1864, aged 4 years, 4 months

Struck by thunder

Vernon Albert

A most unusual monument stands near the street in Pine Hill Cemetery, Burlington, N. C., to the memory of Vernon Albert, 1899-1911. When I first saw it the marker was a small showcase, glass on two sides, the sort used in stores years ago to display flavoring extracts. In this case were a trumpet and a 25-cent piece over a note which read: "Our little boy was killed on account of this." Rhymes from the child's composition

book were pasted inside on the glass. In the parent's hand: "As our little boy writ."

> There is so much good in the worst of us
> And so much bad in the best of us
> It doesn't behoove any of us
> To talk about the rest of us.

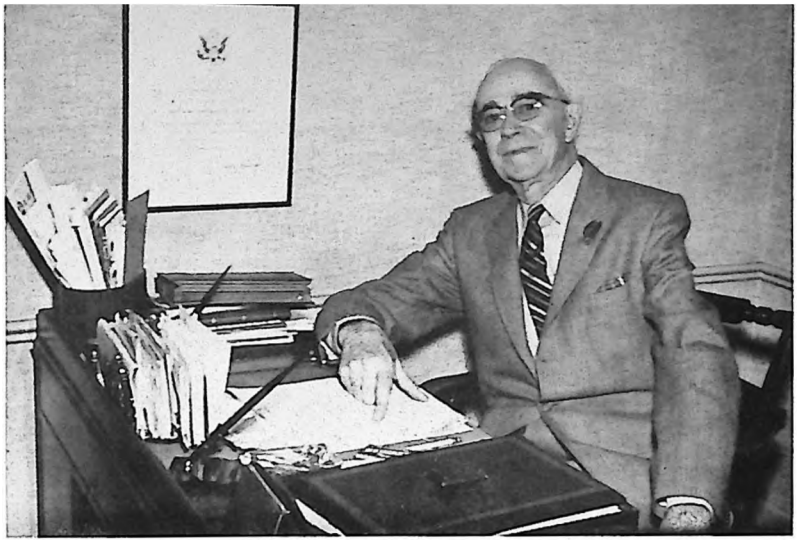
"As our little boy said":

> Tell me not in mournful numbers
> Life is but an empty dream;
> For the soul is not dead that slumbers
> And things are not what they seem.

"Composed by Vernon":

> Life is real and life is earnest
> And the grave is not its goal;
> Dust unto dust returneth
> Was not spoken of the soul.

Later on the note and the coin were removed; another horn was substituted for the trumpet; and the wooden sides of the case were replaced with marble and the "poems composed by Vernon" were carved on the marble top and sides of the little showcase. No one ever had the heart to tell the parents that the first "poem" is a bit of ancient doggerel, and the next two "poems" are stanzas from Longfellow's "Psalm of Life."



Alonzo C. Hall is a native of Burlington, N. C. He is an honor graduate of Elon College, an M.A. of Columbia University, and a graduate student of the University of Virginia and Harvard University. He was Professor of English and American Literature at the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina until his retirement in 1956. Professor Hall is the author of "Outlines of American Literature," and co-author with Dr. Leonard B. Hurley of "Outlines of English Literature."

McNally of Charlotte Charlotte 2, N. C.